

House Resolution 1667

By: Representative Frazier of the 123rd

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Georgia Department of Human Resources to adopt policies and procedures for
2 informing the public and, specifically, couples about to be married regarding the need for
3 testing for sickle cell anemia; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Sickle cell anemia is a lethal disease caused by a recessive gene in a carrier
5 parent; and

6 WHEREAS, children with sickle cell anemia may experience serious complications which
7 include fatigue, fever, difficulty breathing, excruciating pain, stroke, leg ulcers, and
8 premature death; and

9 WHEREAS, the disease causes damage to most organs including the spleen, kidney, and
10 liver which also makes sickle cell disease patients, especially young children, easily
11 overwhelmed by bacterial infections; and

12 WHEREAS, two carrier parents have a one in four chance of having a child with the disease;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, while African Americans have the highest incidence of sickle cell disease in the
15 U.S., Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Indian, Greek, and Caucasian persons may also carry the
16 sickle cell trait or have sickle cell disease; and

17 WHEREAS, there are currently 70,000 Americans with sickle cell disease and hundreds
18 more are diagnosed each year; and

19 WHEREAS, about 2 million Americans carry the sickle cell trait and about 1 in 12 African
20 Americans has the trait; and

1 WHEREAS, despite many attempted treatments for sickle cell anemia, there is currently no
2 universal cure for the disease; various approaches are being sought for preventing sickling
3 episodes as well as for the complications of sickle cell disease; and

4 WHEREAS, there is a tremendous need for educating people about this tragic disease and
5 especially the need for testing prior to pregnancy as an essential component of preventing
6 new cases of children with sickle cell anemia;

7 WHEREAS, of Georgia's various governmental agencies, the Georgia Department of Human
8 resources is best able to act responsibly and efficiently in educating the public regarding the
9 need for sickle cell testing and the dangers of sickle cell anemia.

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
11 the members of this body urge the Georgia Department of Human Resources to adopt
12 policies, procedures, and practices which:

13 (1) Establish an educational program and public awareness campaign to educate Georgians
14 regarding the symptoms and dangers of sickle cell anemia and the need for couples to
15 submit to standard serologic testing for sickle cell anemia prior to marriage and pregnancy;

16 (2) Prepare an informational brochure describing the inheritable hemoglobin type of sickle
17 cell anemia which may convey the sickle cell anemia trait or the sickle cell anemia disease
18 to the offspring of a carrier. Such brochure shall recommend that each applicant for a
19 marriage license obtain a standard serologic test for sickle cell anemia prior to obtaining
20 such license;

21 (3) Provide forms to acknowledge receipt of such brochure by an applicant for a marriage
22 license. The brochure and form prepared by the department should be prepared and
23 furnished to the office of each judge of the probate court no later than January 1, 2009;

24 (4) Establish a policy for requiring that persons who apply for a marriage license shall, at
25 the time of application, receive from the office of the probate judge the sickle cell brochure
26 prepared and furnished by the department and that the forms should be filed and
27 maintained by the judge of the probate court for at least three years after the date of filing.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
29 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Commissioner of the
30 Georgia Department of Human Resources and to the Governor.